

WYCOMBE THIRD — THANKS TO KEITH

THE true value of Keith Searle, Wycombe Wanderers' top marksman for the last two years, was clearly emphasised at Bromley on Saturday when he snatched the two goals in Wanderers' 2-0 Isthmian League victory. And it was Keith's goals that moved the Blues into third position in the table — their highest placing since the start of the season.

The Blues' attack, which has lacked control and polish for much of this season, has recently come to life again since the return of Searle and the advent of Kenny Swain.

It was the cool, decisive way Searle took his goals that earned two points from a game greatly hindered by a strong wind and bumpy pitch.

As at Loakes Park recently, Bromley belied their position of third from bottom in the table. Their defence is big, strong and tight while they fight for everything in midfield. The one place they fall down, however, is upfront. With lightweight John Rains, their top scorer, again firmly marked out of the game by John Delaney, and Dave Bullock, they seldom looked like beating John Maskell in the visitors' goal.

Wanderers started well and with Larry Pritchard sending a constant flow of passes to the unguarded flanks, Wycombe powered forward in the early stages. As the half progressed, however, the tempo slowed and mistakes became more evident.

All too often Wycombe were within an ace of scoring but after exciting build-ups, the final pass or the finish wasn't there. Bromley played a large part in this too, often spoiling some fine raids.

New boy Kenny Swain, who has played so well in his three previous matches, was guilty of attempting too much. In his short stay with Wycombe, Swain has given opposing full backs the runaround. But on Saturday Bromley's Colin Brown dispossessed and tackled him all too easily. On several occasions, Swain hung onto the ball too long when the early pass would have been more beneficial.

As at Stortford last week, Wanderers got off to a good start with an early goal. Dave Bullock provided the pass, clipping the ball over the head of big John Miles to Keith Searle who had made a diagonal run across the box. Keith ran on, drew goalkeeper Keith Beering and cracked the ball home.

At this stage, the Blues were

threatening all the time. Bromley left the flanks unattended and Paul Birdseye was constantly using the overlap as Wycombe powered forward.

Roy Pettet, Bromley's man of the match at Wycombe, went close when he headed Phil Debnam's free kick towards the top

of the net but Maskell pushed the ball over the top. From the corner, the goalkeeper plucked the ball out of the air with ease.

The action wasn't at the Wycombe end for long, however. After 28 minutes

Swain pulled the ball across the area to Williams, speeding up from midfield. Rob fired in a hard shot which Beering could only parry away for a corner and Swain's flag kick was met first time by Pritchard, but his side-foot attempt was well saved.

Bromley were hard pressed to stop a second goal and with their defence caught awfully square at times, they were always suspect to the quick break down the middle.

As the half progressed, however, they began to come into the game and set up some neat attacks. All they needed was penetration up front but they got little change from Delaney and Bullock.

Bromley's improvement continued into the second half. Early on they mounted several useful looking raids and caused the visitors some anxious moments.

Their fighting spirit seemed to take some of the steam out of Wanderers who began to bunch

in midfield. Johnny Hutchinson, after a good start, faded badly while the distribution deteriorated.

Nevertheless, Wanderers were still carving out the occasional chance like in the 63rd minute when Searle sent a long ball over to Swain on the right. The winger controlled well and then hammered in a cross-shot only inches too far from the oncoming Tony Horseman.

Then the Horseman-Searle combination almost paid off but the latter powered a drive just over the bar after a quick one-two. In the 72nd minute, however, Keith made no such mistake with another opportunity.

The original mistake came from Mick Miles, whose half-hearted clearance was picked up by Swain. He crossed over the box to Birdseye who slipped the ball through to Searle. John Delaney jumped over the ball, allowing the centre-forward to run on and rap the ball past a stranded Beering.

The second goal killed off any faint hopes Bromley might have had of a point and in the last 15 minutes most of the spectators (and the players I suspect) were more interested in the F.A. Cup semi-final bulletins announced over the loud speaker, than the game at hand.

BROMLEY: K. Beering, P. Debnam, C. Brown, R. Pettet, J. Miles, M. Miles, M. Trevett, P. Deadman (sub: J. Rooth, 45 mins.), J. Rains, R. Wisseenden, R. Head.

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell; I. Rundle, D. Bullock, J. Delaney, P. Birdseye; R. Williams, L. Pritchard, J. Hutchinson; A. Horseman, K. Searle, K. Swain. Sub: A. Gane (not used).

Referee:

Half-time: 0-1.

Goalscorers: Wycombe — Searle 2 (14, 72).

By STUART EARP; Bromley 0, Wycombe W. 2

How they stand

ISTHMIAN LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hendon	37	32	5	0	83	14	69
Leatherhead	38	21	8	9	65	27	50
Wycombe Wanderers	38	23	4	11	50	29	50
Tooting & Mitcham United	41	20	11	10	72	38	50
Sutton United	40	20	9	11	64	46	49
Walhamstow Avenue	37	18	12	7	58	39	48
Walton & Hersham	34	19	9	6	41	19	47
Kingstonian	38	19	9	10	57	44	47
Ilford	42	18	9	15	61	59	45
Woking	39	18	7	14	60	51	43
Enfield	36	17	7	12	77	45	41
Bishop's Stortford	34	16	9	9	49	36	41
Dulwich Hamlet	39	16	8	15	54	51	40
Leytonstone	36	14	11	11	45	42	39
Hayes	36	14	8	14	52	37	36
Fitchin Town	36	14	6	16	47	57	34
Barking	41	8	7	26	43	85	23
St. Albans City	39	6	11	23	33	69	21
Oxford City	40	6	7	27	29	95	19
Bromley	41	4	9	28	30	69	17
Clapton	38	3	11	24	30	87	17
Corinthian-Casuals	38	3	6	29	28	100	12